A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, October 4. 1709.

I Have already introduc'd the following Diſcourſe, with a Scheme of what has happen'd in *Scotland* between the Church and the *Epiſcopal Diſſenters*; I muſt make it yet more plain, by laying down the Mater of Fact as it lies before us hiſtorically, I mean of all that has happen'd ſince, in and about *Edinburgh*, relating to the Suppreſſing of Meeting Houſes in *Scotland*. But before I enter upon this Diſcourſe, I am to premiſe ſome Things, which ſeem eſſential to the perfect Underſtanding the Story, and to the reſolving the Difficulties about it.

And *Firſt*, it is to be premis'd—That after all the Clamour that had been made of Perſecution in *Scotland*, the *Diſſenters* there were freely permitted to keep open their Meeting-houſes, not any Diſturbance was offer'd them; and would they be contented with that Liberty, as was formerly us'd, I ſee no Reaſon to think, they would have met with any Diſturbance at all, (Invaſions and publick Dangers excepted) for the Time to come.

Secondly, I muſt premiſe, That as the *Epiſcopal* People in *Scotland* did not, when their Church was reigning in *Scotland*, receive the *Engliſh* Common-Prayer Book, or make uſe of it in their Churches, ſo the greateſt Part of the *Epiſcopal Diſſenters* now in Scotland, *tho' great Pains have been taken to perſwade them to embrace it*, do yet reject it; ſome of them have preach'd againſt

againſt it—And thoſe Meetings, that have ſet it up, have viſibly a Decreaſe in their Numbers, even to a ſcandalous few, while the other Meetings, that refuſe it, are crouded, and full.

Thirdly, I premiſe, That the Averſion of the Generality of the People in *Scotland* to the Common-Prayer is ſuch, and ſo known, that no Attempt to introduce the ſaid Common-Prayer there can proſper, *but by Force*—Which Force, as it cannot have the Law on its ſide, cannot be attempted, but with a Deſign to diſturb the publick Peace, and that it ought not by the Union to be impos'd upon the *Scots* to allow a Worſhip among them, which is ſo contrary to their known Laws, and to the eſtabliſh'd Worſhip—So it is evident, all theſe Attempts, of which we ſhall now diſcourſe, are made purely to embroil the People, and to foment National Averſions between the Church of *England* and the *Scots*, and to enflame and enrage the People on either ſide.

Having premis'd theſe Things, I am now to proceed to relating the Fact, and am to tell you, that the reſtleſs Party in this Iſland, and I ſhall prove before I have done, that the *South* are more concern'd in it than the *North* too, being diſappointed in the Tranquility they found growing in *Scotland*, and the Ceſſation of the Breach between the *Epiſcopal Diſſenters* and the Church—found there was but one way to revive that Breach, and renew the Noiſe of Perſecution, which they found was ſo much to their Advantage; *and this was*, to ſet up the Common-Prayer Book in *Scotland*.

It is true, this Attempt had once formerly embroil'd the two Nations in War and Blood, and they knew, the People of *Scotland* would not by any Means bear the Innovation—But this was far from obſtructing the Attempt—I am loth to ſay it was rather a Motive—But it is hard to ſay, what other Motive they could have.

To make the Eſſay; a *Scots Epiſcopal* Miniſter is found, who having been in *Ireland*, but finding but poor Living there on the Work of the Clergy, whether ſent for, or coming to ſeek his Fortune, he comes to *Edinburgh*. Here he is receiv'd as a proper Tool to begin the Comedy—And as if on purpoſe to irritate the People, he takes a Houſe juſt oppoſite to the Croſs of *Edinburgh*, where he ſets up the Common-Prayer.

It was given out at firſt, That this was for the Uſe of the *Engliſh* Officers of the Cuſtoms, Exciſe, Exchequer, *&c.* who could not conform to the *Presbyterian* Worſhip; and indeed ſome of theſe Gentlemen were drawn in to own it—And a Subſcription was propos'd to be made to raiſe this new Gentleman 80 *l. per Annum* for his Encouragement—to which ſome *Engliſh* Officers had Diſcretion little enough to ſubſcribe; but they ſoon ſaw their Miſtake, cancell'd their Subſcription, and forſook the fooliſh Deſign——— Nor ſhall I do them ſo much Injury, as it would be, to publiſh their Names, *tho' very well known to me*, their early abandoning the Man, having aton'd in Part for the Error.

I cannot however but note one Thing—relating to the *Engliſh* Officers in publick Employment in *Scotland*; it ſeems to me very reaſonable, that they, who eat the Government's Bread there, ought to be ſuch as can comply with the eſtabliſh'd Church there—And if they will pretend to joyn with the Enemies of the Church of *Scotland*, who at the ſame time live upon *Scotland*, the Government ought to remove them, and put in thoſe that will—Again, if no *Presbyterian* can be admitted to a Place in *England*, but he muſt conform to the Church of *England*— It is much more juſt, none of thoſe that will joyn in the open Inſults of the Church of *Scotland*, ſhould get their Bread under the Government there—— If they do not like the *Presbyterians*, why will they go there for Places? They will not admit a *Presbyterian*, *as ſuch*, *here*, why ſhould they ſend Church-men among *Presbyterians* there? 'Tis hard they will puſh into Places, where they will not comply with the Church, and puſh *Preſbyterians* out of Places at home, unleſs they will comply with their Church; but this is a Digreſſion, I may enlarge on it hereafter.

I return to the Fact, and you are to understand, that on this new Attempt of setting up the Common-Prayer Book in *Scotland* — The Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* addreſs'd the Commiſſion of the General Aſſembly which was then ſitting, and then to the Magiſtrates of *Edinburgh*, that a ſpeedy Courſe might be taken to put the Laws in Execution againſt Innovations, and particularly to prevent their ſetting up the Common-Prayer in *Scotland*, as what was expreſly articled againſt in the Act of Security for the Church of *Scotland*, which Act was made Part of the Union.

This Application of the Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* was follow'd with others, and Addreſſes were preparing from ſeveral other Parts of the Kingdom, and 'tis probable, would have been very numerous— But the Commiſſion proceeding regularly in this Affair, prevented their Application.

The Commiſſion of the Aſſembly immediately made an Act, obliging every Preſbytry to make due Enquiry in their reſpective Bounds after Innovations, and to proceed therein according to Law.

Here follows the Addreſs of the People of *Edinburgh* to their Magiſtrates upon this Affair— In our next ſhall be inſerted the Addreſs to the Commiſſion of the General Aſſembly.

It may be obſerv'd that the Warmth and Forwardneſs of the Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* was ſuch, that in three Hours Time, ſeveral hundred Hands of the principal Inhabitants of the City were gotten to the Paper.

Unto the Right Honourable the Lord Provoſt and Bailies of the City of Edinburgh.

The Humble Repreſentation of the Neighbours and Inhabitants of the ſaid City, in Proſecution of the former Addreſſes made by them and others, to the Reverend Commiſſion of the late General Aſſembly.

Honourable and Worthy Patriots,

" WHereas our Holy Proteſtant Reform'd Religion and Preſervation " thereof, in the Purity of Doctrine, Wor" ſhip, Diſcipline, and Church-Government, " from Innovations intruded without Warrant and Authority of the Holy Scriptures, " the only Rule of our Faith and Life, " and of Worſhiping God through our " Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould be to all, and " is, we hope, to many of us, dearer than " our Lives.

" And whereas the ſame was fully " Eſtabliſh'd by the Laws of *Scotland*, after " our Bleſſed Reformation from Popery, " and by the late Happy Revolution re" ſtor'd to Us; And whereas Notwith" ſtanding of our Acts of Parliament, and " Act of our late General Aſſembly, where " our Gracious Queen *ANNE* is repre" ſented by her Commiſſioner, and Acts " of Inferiour Church Judicatories; And " albeit your Honours have zealouſly ap" pear'd againſt *Popery*, Innovations and " Deluſions, yet Papiſts do ſtill continue " boldly to diſſeminate their Principles, " and in the Teeth of One expreſs Act of " Parliament to keep publick Schools, and " others to ſet up Meeting-houſes, and " therein introduce Innovations according " to the Church of *England*'s Liturgy; ſo " much againſt the plain reiterated Laws " of *Scotland*, ratifying the Doctrine, Wor" ſhip, Diſcipline, and Government of this " Church, by which we have all Security Law " can give us againſt all ſuch Innovations, " and againſt all Enthuſiaſtick Principles. " And thoſe that deſſeminate the ſame, ſo " much to the Prejudice, to the Purity of " our Holy Religion.

May it therefore pleaſe your Lordſhip and Honours, in Conſideration of the Premiſes, and for the Glory of God, and Security of the Peace, to put our good Laws in Execution, and to take ſuch prudent and effectual Methods, as may deliver this City and Places of your Juriſdiction from the foreſaid Practices of Papiſts and above Innovations, and Enthuſiaſts, which corrupt our Holy Religion, and in ſuch Manner as may prevent the like in Time coming.

And your Petitioners ſhall ever pray.